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ABSTRACT

This journal is devoted to the art of teaching in the field of speech communication. Articles collected in this issue address topics on the development of basic speech communication courses and include the following titles: "Onward . . . A Tradition Continues"; "Performance Courses: No Way to Run a Railroad" and "Not Revolution but Revision," which discuss the relative merits of instruction in public speaking and interpersonal communication; "The In-the-Field Project: Escaping the Dull Topic Syndrome"; "On the Quantification of Interpersonal Interaction"; and "From the Teacher's Notebook," two selections which describe exercises in self-awareness and the use of learning contracts with student interns. (KS)

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[FOCUS: PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSES].

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ONWARD . . . A TRADITION CONTINUES

It is much easier to continue a tradition than to establish one. The journal that Don Williams began with modesty and enthusiasm has, in three years, established itself as a practical, creative and informative reference for teachers of Speech Communication. Its readership is not restricted to the state of Florida but includes regional and national subscribers. Contributors to the Journal represent scholars in Florida and eighteen other states. Articles cover topics of interest and relevance for teachers from the elementary school through the university. In its relatively brief history *The Florida Speech Communication Journal* has made a significant contribution to the advancement of scholarship in the field of Speech Communication.

As the new Journal editor, I thank my predecessor for providing a solid foundation of scholarship. His effort has made my task one that I am eager to begin. *The Journal* will continue to function as a forum for new ideas, considered opinion and intellectual growth. Our goal will continue to be the improvement of teaching Speech Communication. A worthy tradition has been established . . . onward! KPT.

The 1975 FSCA Convention featured a presentation by Professor Michael Burgoon on the relationship between empirical research and the substance of classroom public speaking instruction. Reaction to Dr. Burgoon's remarks was vocal, varied and plentiful. For the benefit of those who did not hear Dr. Burgoon's informative and provocative presentation, the editor invited him to share his thoughts with **The Journal** readers.

In contrast, Professor Ed Wycoff, Coordinator of the Basic Speech Course at Florida Technological University, was asked to present his position on the value of the traditional approach to teaching the basic speech course. Neither writer has seen the observations of the other. Both are invited to respond in the next issue of **The Journal.** Comments from **The Journal** readers are always welcome and encouraged.

PERFORMANCE COURSES: NO WAY TO RUN A RAILROAD

MICHAEL BURGOON

Usually when a scholar prepares a manuscript for publication in a professional journal, he does so with the hope that it will be well received, make changes in the knowledge base of the discipline, and *frankly* bring him personal rewards in the way of praise, recognition, etc. I bring no such expectation to this task. Because of the nature of the readership of this journal and the nature of my views, I expect neither universal positive reaction nor massive behavioral change. Further, this piece will not add to the knowledge base of the discipline, for this article and its rejoinder are merely restatements of old arguments already resolved at the national levels of our discipline. However, I believe it is worthwhile to consider certain issues concerning our teaching. Hopefully, such an examination can only benefit the discipline. I am strongly opposed to Speech being identified as a pedagogy of performance. I believe that courses that are primarily performance oriented have little place in our curriculum. Moreover, I believe the public speaking orientation has actually impeded the intellectual growth of our discipline.[1] I hope my writing is as unambiguous about these matters as are my feelings. I will attempt to briefly outline my objections and offer substantive suggestions in this article.

Michael Burgoon is Associate Professor of Speech at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

THE CASE AGAINST PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSES . . .

My initial concern about public speaking courses came several years ago when I was teaching in an institution that had speech and non-speech teachers in the same administrative unit. The basic course in Speech was primarily performance oriented. That is another way of saying that each student gave five or six speeches, and the professor imparted content in whatever little time was left. As sort of an interesting, albeit unscientific, test of the effects of a public speaking course, we made some comparisons. We had both speech and non-speech teachers assigned to teach the introductory public speaking course. We had the students present their final speeches in front of three faculty members. We found some interesting things. First, the correlation between experienced teachers of Speech and people with no formal experience on ratings of the quality of final performances was greater than .90. What that says, I guess, is that people "know" a good or bad speech when they hear one. It also says formal training may have little to do with the ability to judge the speech act. The second thing we found was that students did equally well in classes taught by persons from another discipline as in classes taught by speech teachers. A third manipulation was affected without the knowledge of the faculty evaluating speeches. Students who were taking a non-performance, interpersonal communication course also gave speeches. The amazing thing was that their speeches were equal in quality to the students completing a performance oriented public speaking course.

This troubled me at the time and still bothers me today. It suggested to me that our basic course had real problems. Moreover, it suggested that it didn't matter who taught the course or what the course covered, students did equally well on the performances. Finally, it suggested that regardless of the educational background of the teacher, speeches were evaluated in the same way. Over the years, I have formulated what I think are valid criticisms of public speaking and other performance oriented courses.

First, *what is being taught in many performance oriented courses is not isomorphic with the research knowledge available in the discipline.* This particular article is not a research monograph but I will allude to a few examples to demonstrate my point. The entire area of speech/message organization is an excellent exemplar. Many public speaking texts heavily stress the need to organize speeches in *prescribed* manners. It is claimed, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, that our knowledge indicates a specific relationship between type or amount of organization and communication outcomes such as comprehension and persuasion. My review of the available research literature forces me to respond "not so, not proven."

The available evidence suggests that type or amount of organization has little to do with anything *except* what grade one might get in a public speaking course. The evidence simply does *not* suggest a relationship between organization and comprehension or persuasion.

Similar statements can be made about the use of evidence. Since there are excellent reviews of the literature on evidence available, I will not repeat the findings here. However, I will tell you that my reading of the research literature leads me to conclude that these findings are not consistent with the material generally found in beginning or advanced texts in public speaking.

The research on *ethos* or source credibility is also not consistent with the concepts generally transmitted to the undergraduate student. Aristotle was not the last person to provide insights on this construct. We now know a great deal about the multidimensional nature of credibility. Moreover, much is known about the interaction of credibility and a number of other communication variables. Yet, *I* do not see that material being diffused to the students in performance oriented public speaking courses.

My second criticism of public speaking approaches to our discipline is that *such an approach locks us in to a static view of the discipline.* Prescriptive approaches that lead students to believe that there is a "right or wrong" way to speak deny the notion that communication is a process.

Much of the reason for this static view is that the people who are trained in the rhetorical-critical areas of our field end up being the protectors and teachers of public speaking courses. Their training in rationalistic philosophies does little to allow them to view knowledge as tentative. The system of thought is not self-correcting in that criticism and interpretation of historical contexts and individual speeches is not objective nor much more than egocentric speculation. Therefore, prescriptive strategies for "good" public speaking are continually taught because "they have always been taught that way." Much of the first criticism I leveled has to do with many public speaking teachers not wanting to be confused with the facts.

Although I have heard public speaking teachers claim that they do teach current materials and use the latest in scientific research, this does not seem to be widespread in the discipline. For one thing, it is difficult if not impossible for people who are not trained as researchers to evaluate research. Therefore, there is a considerable lag between the discovery of knowledge and the diffusion of that information. This problem is not unique to our discipline but affects all areas of knowledge. However, this problem is made more severe when there *is active resistance to the diffusion of ideas.* I sincerely believe that is the case in certain areas of speech. For example, if one were to accept the fact that organization matters little in a speech, many assumptions would also have to change. Pedagogical changes

could be mandated that would drastically change how the courses were taught. Terminal objectives would change and most importantly students would be given more realistic expectations about how their communication behavior was likely to affect others. Many people who believe in and defend public speaking courses on the basis that it helps the student "organize connected discourse" might have to reevaluate their positions. That is why I claim there is active resistance to change in this discipline. It would simply require too much change and a great deal of pain to accept the empirical evidence on how communication really operates.

The third criticism concerns *the lack of objectivity inherent in the critical/performance orientation to our discipline.* Students are required to perform in highly artificial manners that are probably no more effective in reality than any other strategy might be. The student is rarely allowed to be effective if it violates the teacher's notion of what is "right." Unfortunately, these prescriptive dictums often represent white, middle class and mostly middle-age values about the proper way to communicate. We should be in the business of understanding all kinds of communication behavior. We should be encouraging students to experiment with, test, and develop strategies for interpersonal effectiveness. I think the reliance on prescriptive models in these public speaking courses represents the systematic destruction of creativity.

I have made some strong, unequivocal assertions about the lack of value in public speaking. Although many readers of this journal would disagree with these assertions, they would also be hard-pressed to refute the charges. It disturbs me greatly that so little systematic data has been amassed to support the efficacy of performance oriented courses. What little data that is available is in the form of testimony from public speaking teachers about "how much student improvement they observed" or from students testifying about "how valuable the course was." I do not doubt that students give "better" speeches at the end of a course than at the beginning. They learn what the professor wants and are more able to produce that which is expected; moreover, they are probably less anxious in front of the specific class.

What is not in evidence is whether the student is able to carry over or generalize the particular speech-making behavior to other situations. It is also not demonstrated that those particular learned, speech-making behaviors are the most effective in producing desired responses in real situations. A critic (not one trained in the scientific method, though) might respond that there is no evidence to provide lack of support for performance courses. That is what disturbs me. There is no evidence either way. Obviously, the question has not generated research for a variety of reasons. Rival hypotheses concerning why improvement is "demonstrated" are still open to speculation. The profession suffers from lack of data about

the effects of this particular pedagogy. Unfortunately, most defenses of the methodology are not data-based but rather are appeals to tradition.

It is my contention that the performance oriented courses do not offer an adequate introduction to the rich, varied content possessed by Speech. In fact, students and other faculty alike become convinced that the only thing we have to offer is platform speaking and skill improvement/development. Few of us in the profession believe such a proposition, yet our teaching methods and adamant refusal to discard an outmoded course do little to foster any other image. The instructor is often forced to abdicate content responsibilities in order to allow sufficient time for performance. Some even go so far as to suggest *that the only way to learn to communicate in public is via platform speaking.* This is analogous to believing that one can learn to be a sociologist by only learning the techniques of and by doing public opinion polling.

I think we would be better served by accepting the fact that communication occurs in a variety of contexts (e.g. dyadic, small group, one-to-many, etc.) and serves a variety of functions for man. Different variables operate in these situations to provide differing outcomes. Much of our communication occurs in interpersonal and small group contexts. Yet the discipline has treated the one-to-many context as if it were the best vehicle from which to understand the totality of human communication. We are asked to accept that a person who can produce rational "connected discourse" in a public situation will also be a rational decision maker in a small group, a trusting friend, or a loving parent.[2] The presumption is not made by the defenders of the public speaking tradition that the generalizability from effective interpersonal communicator to effective public speaker might be a more reasonable generalization to make. There is a wealth of data to suggest the validity of such a presumption. It appears reasonable to me to structure introductory courses in Speech so that students investigate communication in a number of contexts including the one-to-many situation. It also appears reasonable to me to explore with beginning students some of the functions of communication that are not best studied in the context of public speaking. For example, the development of affinity, communication for social gratification, and communication to resolve conflict are probably not best studied in the context of platform speaking.

We must structure courses so that students can appreciate the complexity of communication while understanding that much is known about the description of that process. We are selling ourselves short by promoting performance courses dealing with this limited context.

Arguments Supporting Performance Courses That I Can Not Accept . . .

In addition to the intellectual arguments about performance courses

that I have reviewed, there are several practical arguments often advanced in support of public speaking courses that demand refutation.

Over the past several months, I have heard several specific positions advanced to support a basic course in public speaking. I find these arguments to be generally unappealing.

Recently, I have heard that students are coming back to public speaking courses because they recognize possessing such a skill has appeal on the job market. If a particular speech department is located in a college of Business Administration that has occupational training as its mission, then this is a fine argument. However, most of us work in a college whose prime mission is the liberal education of students. It is ironic to me that the same people who are now arguing for the merit of public speaking because of this practical import were the ones defending the performance orientation as a liberalizing influence when I first entered the profession a decade ago. I remain unconvinced that a person educated in interpersonal communication is any less employable than one who can deliver a speech. But I remain totally convinced that we must resist the urge to let our basic course be dictated by economic and occupational demands. Our product must be educated people. I believe studying communication functions in a variety of contexts is that kind of general education. Certainly this is the case when compared to studying communication in only one context: platform speaking.

I also reject the notion that Departments of Speech are "obligated" to provide courses in public speaking simply because other departments in their institution want their majors to have such a course. We must make intellectual decisions about the domain of our discipline. This can not be left to the discretion of others who do not understand us as we understand ourselves. If we must educate other departments as to what Speech should be, then so be it. It has been my experience that many departments continue to require a performance oriented public speaking course simply because they are not aware of what else might be available.

Some departments fear that the abandonment of traditional performance courses will somehow reduce their enrollment which will in turn reduce their instructional budget. This fear is especially acute in this state at this time. However, while one can reject on the basis of principle a notion of disciplinary definition based upon notions of fiscal criteria, one must concede that practical considerations are important. I would counter with the fact that enrollments have not declined with the abandonment of performance courses; in fact in most cases enrollments have increased! The second factor that must be considered is that public speaking courses are horribly expensive to operate. Enrollments must be limited if the primary activity in the class is oral performance. The literature indicates average class sizes of from 15-25 students in a typical class in public speak-

ing. In the State University System of Florida, such classes are difficult to justify and maintain.

It appears to me that the concept of predominantly performance oriented classes and larger enrollments are incompatible. It is ironic to me that people are now arguing to go to mass lecture basic courses to save the smaller performance courses. I recently heard a proposal for mass lecturing a public speaking class and using laboratory sections staffed by student assistants for the speaking assignments. As it turned out, this proposal was more expensive than maintaining small individually taught sections. It was aptly pointed out that such an approach puts the least experienced people in the position of critiquing speeches. Of course, we know that the staunch defenders of public speaking claim that the most valuable student learning comes from having the students receive professional criticism! This particular proposal was economically unsound and also unacceptable to those most interested in saving the course.

I think that the economic arguments are less important than the intellectual ones. I refuse to build the case for communication theory courses on the basis that they can serve more students for fewer dollars, even if it is true. However, I reject the arguments of the prophets of doom who sing sad and bitter songs about the loss of students and financial ruin of their departments if they do not maintain performance oriented public speaking courses. In fact, such maintenance of these courses is likely to cause an unfavorable financial drain on the departments involved for there is no way for these courses to pay their way and properly maintain the kind of performance activities said to be required.

The final argument than I can not accept is the common retort I hear from others that my concerns certainly do not apply to them but to everyone else. Maybe other people are guilty of the kinds of things I am being accusatory about but it is certainly not the case in the classroom of anyone I have ever talked to. Like I said, that is one of the arguments I do not accept.

Things I Do Believe . . .

I believe and many other people believe that the knowledge base of this discipline must be based on scientific research. We have content responsibilities and must transmit that content to our students. There is simply no kind way to say that people who are not current in the scientific literature of Speech are not current in Speech at all. There is no tactful way to tell people that what is being taught is wrong and that such a practice of teaching those things is an ethical problem in this field. There is no easy way to convince people that approaches that are prescriptive about the "right" ways to communicate must be abandoned.

I believe we must turn our students into experimenters. We must have "fundamentals" courses that expose our students to *descriptions* of regularities in human communication. They must know the scientific literature and be excited by what is known but realize how much is not known. They must be encouraged to test notions of how communication operates in the world. They should be rewarded for experimenting with creative communication strategies not for "properly" applying the motivated sequence. They should be encouraged to design and run experiments and interpret their findings. By doing these things they will be training themselves to make decisions, and that is the nexus of a liberal education.

The courses we teach should have performance activities! Students should be put into dyadic and small group contexts to *demonstrate* certain principles of communication. They must try out their communication on others and react to others' evaluation of that communication. Perhaps students should give *a* one-to-many presentation in a course and react to how it effects other students. It is obviously *one* context in which communication occurs. What I am saying is that the classroom can be a laboratory for helping the students understand communication in a variety of contexts. It can demonstrate how variables operate in different contexts to produce differing outcomes. The classroom is also a laboratory where students and teachers experiment and gain new ideas for research. For skeptics who claim this can not happen in high schools, I only offer one comment: you are wrong. I had the pleasure of being chairman of a program at the 1972 International Communication Association Convention when two high school students presented a competitively selected paper on *their research*. The panel included four college professors and two high school students. Their speech department had adopted a program similar to the one I am advocating. It can and does work, and the end result is more adaptable and better educated communicators.

FOOTNOTES

1. Although many of my teachers, some of my colleagues, and a host of my students have influenced my thinking on these issues, they should remain blameless for the things said here. I have also resisted the urge to speak for the Department of Speech at the University of Florida.

2. Although I am personally uncomfortable with the term "connected discourse," I find many of my colleagues using it as a euphimism for public speaking. I find it less than useful because I do not know what "unconnected discourse" might be.

FSC JOURNAL, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1976

NOT REVOLUTION BUT REVISION

EDGAR B. WYCOFF

For many years, public speaking courses and textbooks have dominated introductory speech courses at most colleges and universities.[1] Recently a change has occurred. In 1972 Ilardo reported:

> In speech departments across the country there is an upsurge of interest in the field of interpersonal communication often at the expense of the more traditional public speaking courses. The emphasis in required courses particularly is being shifted from public speaking to interpersonal.[2]

Anyone who has been a coordinator of a first course program since 1972 and who has seen the deluge of interpersonal texts assailing their mailbox would agree. The interpersonal perspective for the first course offers the first serious departure from public speaking in several decades. It could be a major turning point or a passing fad. It is still too early to tell. There is little doubt, however, that interpersonal's influence is here to stay.

A 1972 survey of 72 western colleges and universities revealed that only approximately 30 percent of the schools continued to emphasize public address for the fundamentals course and that 43 percent reported they were "communication-oriented" [including interpersonal content] in the first course.[3] Some publishers, reflecting upon textbook sales, indicated that although western states are still strong in the interpersonal approach, many northeastern schools are returning to the traditional type of course.[4]

The faculty at Florida Technological University recently found difficulty in agreeing upon a text for the fundamentals course. How much interpersonal as opposed to how much performance content? This same question is probably on the minds of a good many people today within our profession. In formulating our answer we might find that it is often easier to be attracted to the new than find much value in the old.

A clear decision is further complicated by a clash between the more conservative and those who wish to treat interpersonal communication as a movement overcoming everything in its path. Like every other movement in history there must be the scapegoat, or as Burke calls it, "the total cathartic enemy."[5] The target in this case is public speaking. Of the more avid, and I might say acid, public speaking critics are Mehrley and Backes.

Edgar B. Wycoff is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Florida Technological University, Orlando.

All traditional approaches fall victim to their poetic wrath:

> What variations uttered on those treasured shibboleths "More eye-contact," "Try some gestures," "Seemed to lack poise," and/or "Tighten up the organization a little bit." Pick a text, almost any text, and tiptoe through the labyrinthian wastelands of platform movement, the vocalized pause, the proper use of note cards, and that hardy triumvirate of rhetorical musketeers: Logos, Pathos, and their trusty companion, Ethos . . . Too many basic courses in speech are intellectual wastelands . . . More often than not it is still taught along lines more appropriate for achieving a Boy Scout's merit badge in public speaking than earning three hours of college credit.[6]

There is, of course, a primitive urge to retaliate with an attack on their citadel. And there are valid arguments that could be cited against the teaching of interpersonal communication at an introductory level.[7] But the exchange of charges back and forth has proven ineffective, historically, and results in little more than mutual annihilation.

The Charges

A cool and dispassionate examination of the charges against the speaker-audience approach to the first course might prove much more productive. Ilardo specified what he believed to be weaknesses in the performance course:

> Public speaking fails to satisfy the needs of the average person because it is based, in large measure, on some of the very values which are in transition presently. The notion of "control-over-others-through-the-spoken-word" implies that such control is desirable or at least not undesirable. Moreover, public speaking places somewhat more emphasis on techniques and method than does interpersonal communication.[8]

The influence orientation, consistent with neo-Aristotelian rhetorical theory, is viewed by many as being a characteristic limitation of the public speaking course. Prescriptive techniques and methods, necessarily involved in the instruction of performance skills, are also perceived as a serious limitation by some. Mehrely and Backes offer a less poetic and more legitimate criticism when they say that "the basic course has focused too exclusively upon . . . norms."[9] Such norms they claim are derived from the admonitions of those considered authorities.

Opponents of the public speaking approach to the introductory course further feel that such training serves as preparation for a rare event—those few times in one's life when he or she is called upon to speak formally to a large audience. Since apparently few teachers are able to show the relevance of the principles of public speaking to the more common dyadic or small group experiences, performance courses have begun to lose their luster in the eyes of some students.

It is often difficult to determine whether the problems assigned to public speaking courses are caused by the subject matter or by the teachers. In any event, public speaking's report card, according to several observers, is showing some fairly low grades of late. These low grades are being attributed primarily to: (1) an influence-over-others tone (manipulation); (2) an excessive technique approach which requires normative evaluations (prescriptive); and (3) little relevance to common experience. Some of these problems may be merely in the mind of distractors. Still, I contend that they *can* be corrected. If they are real, they should be corrected soon to avoid further debate and dissension that causes only harm. But to do so requires an understanding and respect for what the performance-oriented course has to offer.

The Defense

Before enumerating a few points in support of a speaker-audience type of introductory course, let me touch upon what I consider to be one of the contributing causes of our growing dilemma. For some reason, the number of people involved in a communication event has recently become a paramount concern. Text after text draws careful and distinct lines between interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication. And yet, Walter Cronkite and John Chancellor continue to address millions of Americans each night in much the same way as they would if they were sitting across from us in our living rooms. Nevertheless, the careful classifications continue: the smallest unit, of course, is the individual. When individuals communicate with one another, we are obliged to call that "interpersonal." Monroe and Ehninger even say that to be "interpersonal" there must be just two people, no more.[1] If a third individual joins two others, the "interpersonal" immediately becomes "small group" and then if one more person meets with a group of 12, the "small group" suddenly becomes "public" communication. As the crowd grows the communication becomes either "mass," "electronic," or "societal."

Perhaps my cynicism of this system is creeping through. I do feel, however, that we tend to make too much of the differences and overlook the more enlightening similarities. It is important to remember that these varied types of communication are points along a continuum—with numbers of people as increments—and there are *few principles of effectiveness that do not apply all along the way.*

The "public" in public speaking is something of a myth in my view. We tend to relate to one person at a time. Even the effective public speaker, though he may be heard by many, looks individuals in the eye when he makes his points. He might periodically shift his attention from one individual to another, not at all unlike a communicator in a triadic

situation, nor in a dyadic situation. There are, of course, situational differences, but most of the same principles apply.

Stewart describes three fundamental and unique elements in "An Interpersonal Approach to the Basic Course," that could be applied to a performance course.[11] Even so, much is made of the differences. With the evolution of these situational classifications of communication, however ethereal they may be, empires have apparently formed contributing to much of the debate.

Ironically, the individual who, according to Hardo," sparked the interest that gave rise to courses in interpersonal communication"[12] is the same person to assist me with my *first reason for maintaining a performance introductory course*. In relatively recent years, Abraham Maslow developed the idea of self-actualization—a state of existence in which a person functions more fully and lives a more enriched life than does the average person.[13] To help individuals achieve this state would appear to be rewarding, not only for the individual, but for the society at large.

The individual's facility to communicate is associated with several components of self-actualization, such as self-concept. Ferullo discovered that ". . . better speakers tended to reveal a significantly higher degree of self-satisfaction, self-acceptance, independence, emotional control and personality integration than did the poorer speakers."[14] McCroskey found that students in a basic speech course derived increased confidence.[15] Brooks and Platz, measuring 1200 freshmen taking a basic speech course, found that within three-fourths of the experimental group there was a significant improvement in self-concept as a communicator."[16] Shostrom has identified several components of self-actualization which include "self-regard" and "self-acceptance."[17] He also has designed a therapy to develop it.[18] I believe that given the proper classroom interaction, improvement in a student's self-actualization might be experienced in a performance course.

Maslow observed that self-actualized people enjoyed a high frequency of what he called "peak experiences" or "momentary periods in which one senses the full functioning of all their personal resources."[19] He further suggested that recall of these invigorating moments offers positive encouragement toward further growth and achievement. Having been sufficiently gratified in such basic needs as love, safety, and self-esteem, we are, according to Maslow, motivated to satisfy "higher needs" of self-fulfillment. Satisfying these higher needs "fosters growth toward psychological 'success,' and toward more peak-experiences . . ."[20] Most of us who have taught speech for any period of time have heard many stories about why the student is horrified of public speaking. Many of the stories stem from a single traumatic experience—the very opposite of a positive peak experience. The trauma is apparently resurrected upon notice that the individual must again stand before an audience.

To enable the traumatized student to replace that negative experience with a positive peak experience would be a worthy challenge for a fundamentals course in oral communication. Since formal speaking is typically an anxiety laden event, calling upon all the logical and emotional resources an individual can muster, it would appear to be a most suitable setting to engender true peak experiences as Maslow conceived the term. I believe that a performance-oriented fundamentals course, properly conducted, *can provide the conditions for the student to undergo at least one peak experience* out of several speaking assignments. By this I mean that within at least one of several speeches during a term the student senses a rewarding, elating, positive experience in the planning of his thoughts, the expressing of himself, and the feeling of confidence that other minds were affected by his message. Such a peak experience could be a positive reinforcement, whether the student has undergone a traumatic speech event or not. Building on the positive experience, the student might continue to grow and improve toward self-actualization in the communication dimension.

There are no explicit research findings to support my contention. It can only be said that since improvements in public speaking have been correlated with an improved self-concept, and since an improved self-concept is a component of self-actualization, and since self-satisfying or "actualizing" events can create conditions for peak experiences, one might reasonably expect the occurrence of peak experiences in a course with a public speaking format. Of course, in a public speaking course, a trauma could also be reinforced or, for that matter, created for the first time. The instructor's ability to create a positive climate of support and acceptance would largely determine whether conditions for peak experiences are provided or not.

About 2400 years ago Isocrates noted, "for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding . . . for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts . . ."[21] The idea of transferring knowledge and skills derived from speaking to other behaviors has been around for some time. I believe *transfer does occur as a result of speech training* and it is the second reason I propose a speaker-audience introductory course.

Mehrley and Backes claim "there is no known evidence" for transferring knowledge and skills learned in public speaking to other communication forms.[22] Perhaps few specific studies on transfer are available, but to say there is no evidence is a rather brazen and, I think, inaccurate statement. Thorndike, who was one of the early pioneers in the theory of transfer, proposed in 1906 that a transfer of facts, skills, and even attitudes could be accomplished if an individual sees identical elements in two different

situations.[23] Cronbach extended the idea in 1963 by observing that transfer of behavioral patterns occurs whenever the person recognizes that the new situation is similar to other situations for which the behavior was appropriate.[24] Would it not be reasonable then to suspect that a student who had developed a skill in communicating, under the constraints of selection, accuracy, organization, and timing imposed by the formal speaker-audience situation, would recall a number of communication similarities in say an interpersonal situation? I am not ready to deny transfer from public speaking training and experience to other communication forms merely because of a lack of empirical evidence. Rather than to deny its existence, it would seem much more constructive to encourage more valid and reliable experimentation.

The lack of empirical evidence charge brings me to a further point about the teaching of public speaking. Mehrley and Backes cite Becker's observation that "As a matter of fact, experimental studies to date, especially among college students, provide little evidence that students in speech . . . courses improve much more" in communication than those not taking a speech course.[25] A closer examination of the Becker comment reveals that it could be easily misinterpreted out of context. For in the same 1963 article Becker cites no less than ten studies revealing "evidence" in support of the public speaking course.[26] His point was not that there was no available evidence, but rather that the studies done up to that time had been weakly formulated and were wanting primarily in the area of control. He mentions one study comparing four speech assignments done by Nelson which, in Becker's words, "was the best designed study I found on the problem of assignment type . . . He found that all methods resulted in significant improvement. . ."[27]

Becker does not say that evidence is unavailable in support of educational gains from the public speaking course. He does assert, however, that most of the studies in the speech communication field up until 1963 were suspect for a number of variables tended to confound the typical classroom experiment. He concludes: "It is only through testing in carefully controlled experiments that we can be sure that we have properly identified the variables we believe are responsible for the effects noted."[28]

I endorse Becker's appeal for more carefully controlled experimentation for how else can we build our science? But until all the evidence is complete, we must hold a tolerance for some ambiguity for we must teach. There are those who contend that performance courses are "intellectual wastelands"[29] and others who suggest that there might be something perverse about teaching a course that is not totally grounded in empirical evidence.[30] However, if we are going to consider that the teaching of knowledge and skills is somehow spurious unless first tested by empirical research, then I am afraid that most liberal arts colleges would have to

close their doors, a number of books discarded, and no athletic programs would be allowed to continue. Techniques and methods used in teaching most performance skills are largely based on norms of what "authorities" and the instructor consider to be effective. Prescriptions, which thereby result, are usually based more upon intuitive common sense rather than deductive chains of logic or formal research. Nevertheless, they are, more often than not, quite valid forms of instruction. In our great quest for "observables" I think we can delude ourselves by: (1) allowing inferences derived from a research to project beyond the limits of the test instrument and thereby beyond reality; (2) attempting to measure the unmeasurable; (3) overlooking the polluting effect of uncontrolled variables; and (4) developing a general suspicion of our own intuitive judgment which, if made honestly, should be sound induction over the various data of past experience, reinforced by an unforgetting subconscious memory.

The third reason I support the performance course concerns the very nature of this type of instruction. There are, of course, several more constraints involved when a student expresses himself to a class or an audience than to another person in an interpersonal setting. These very constraints, however painful they may be at the moment, *teach the student the art of communication*. Boettinger proposes: "Without constraint, there is no need for art. In fact one definition of art is that it is the method of presenting an idea under constraints."[31] Perhaps the speaker-audience situation is arduous, but arduous with a purpose.

After an examination of educational research, Kibler, Barker, and Miles formulate several principles for instructional programs.[32] All could be applied to the speaker-audience course, and four seem particularly appropriate. One calls for a model of the desired behavior. Some teachers provide models of speech assignments. Models are also provided as the instructor identifies superior performance in other students to the class. Kibler, *et al.*, point out that "Imitative learning is one of the most effective procedures by which humans acquire new behavior."[33]

Another principle Kibler, *et al.*, propose is that of "active responding." This is simply the active performance of acts to be learned, which is the basis of the performance course, but limited or nonexistent in other instructional settings. They further suggest the importance of the principle of guidance. Is the instructor able to provide continual guidance? He is in the performance course, but in an unstructured interpersonal setting, for example, this might be more difficult. Practice, too, is an important principle of instruction and, of course, repeated speaking assignments make this possible. Finally, Kibler, *et al.*, mention a principle that seems especially suitable for the public speaking course, "knowledge of results."[34] A student should have prompt and frequent knowledge of the success of his efforts and the evaluation response to his speeches serves in this capacity.

The performance-oriented format lends itself to a number of established principles of instruction. The instructor, can guide and evaluate the students for he is in control of most instructional elements.

The fourth and final reason for supporting the performance approach deals with the objectives of the introductory course. As we all know, time constraints of the quarter or semester limit just how many goals can be accomplished well. Unless we are selective, we might cover a lot with little lasting effect. Faules, Littlejohn, and Ayres reported that students taking a one quarter performance-centered course "to develop a skilled public speaker" resulted in "significantly higher ratings on the criteria of content, language, organization, and general effectiveness than those in a control group."[35] The same researchers found that similar students enrolled in a course "to provide a basis for understanding communication behavior" without speech practice showed no difference when compared with a control group on speaking effectiveness criteria.[36]

The performance course may not provide for the development of proficiency in empathy or the identity of another's nonverbal cues. It is typically not intended to do so. These behaviors are within the domain of interpersonal communication. So we come to a value judgment as to the efficacy of the various behavioral objectives. From my fifteen years experience in industry, I believe that formal speaking effectiveness contributes more to the career goals of most students than any of the other areas of communication. Perhaps influence-over-the-others-through-the-spoken-word has fallen on evil days lately in the eyes of many students and faculty. This has not, however, changed the realities of the business and professional world. Some may feel it unethical to persuade and influence others with their ideas, but most of us still happen to be economic beings living in a society where influence over others, however tainted, is a necessary part of life and an integral part of most professions. Paradoxically, those who express opposition to persuasion are, by their very expression, engaging in it.

Speaking effectiveness has been found to be necessary not only in a number of professions, but also in getting started in a career. Shuy recorded the reactions of 16 employers to tapes of 16 male conversational speakers and concluded that "speech is directly proportionate to employability."[37] Packard specifies "an ease with words and ideas" as one of the seven most important abilities in upward mobility.[38] Formal speech effectiveness is, in the view of many, at a premium in the society in which we live. From a survey by Knapp of the country's largest corporations it was learned that several U. S. firms consider formal speaking important enough to offer it continuously in educational programs.[39] Minnick asserts: "It is my belief that the first course can attain only a few goals . . . Enabling a student to speak persuasively in public should be, in my opinion (and I am aware of bias), the most cherished aim of the speech curriculum."[40]

Non-performance approaches to the introductory course have obviously departed from the "good man speaking well" concept of old. In this post-Watergate era the term "rhetoric" is more appropriate on a bumper sticker deriding an irresponsible politician than in the college classroom. Nevertheless, some things remain unchanged: we can achieve only a few goals in the introductory course, given the limited time, with any degree of success. Developing skills in speaking to an audience would, in my opinion, provide the utmost value to an individual in the economic and democratic society in which we presently live.

Conclusion

There are several valid reasons for continuing to offer the traditional speaker-audience course as an introduction to communication. Most of them are pedagogical: some of them are mentioned here. An opportunity can be provided for positive peak experiences which might carry over to other forms of achievement. Knowledge and skills derived from a performance course are likely to apply to other forms of communication and thinking. The instructional methods are conducive to sound principles of education, and the behavioral goals of the performance course are frequently rewarding to the graduate.

Revisions, however, are clearly necessary—due in large part to the influence of the interpersonal perspective. The too-much-influence question has been with us since the sophists and will undoubtedly continue to be with us in the future. Nonetheless, persuasion should not dominate the first course. All forms of communication should impinge upon the goal of proficiency in formal spoken communication. Prescriptive methods and techniques should be qualified by frequent reference to research. Moreover, the teacher must strive to reveal the relevance of performance skills to common communication experiences. The successful performance course places unusual demands on the instructor, and he or she must have the requisite talent and temperament.

I admit the performance-oriented introductory course needs revision and improvement, but just because we need a few repairs let us not burn the house down.

1. For a 1967-1968 survey see: James Gibson, *et al.*, "The First Course in Speech: A Survey of U.S. Colleges and Universities," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 19 (Jan. 1970), pp. 13-20.
2. Joseph Hardo, "Why Interpersonal Communication," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 21 (Jan. 1972), p. 1.
3. Gordon Owen, *et al.*, "Fundamentals of Speech—Or of Communication—Or of Both?" unpublished report of work done in conjunction with a New Mexico State University grant to improve instruction, Department of Speech, 1973.
4. Conversations by the writer with representatives of Scott, Foresman and Company Publishers and Houghton Mifflin Company during 1975.
5. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, (New York:

The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 286.

6. Samuel Mehrley and James Backes, "The First Course in Speech: A Call for Revolution," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 21 (Sept. 1972), p. 209.

7. Ilardo, pp. 4-5.

8. Ilardo, p. 5.

9. Mehrley and Backes, p. 208.

10. Alan Monroe and Douglas Ehninger, *Principles of Speech Communication*, seventh edition, (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975), p. 355.

11. John Stewart, "An Interpersonal Approach to the Basic Course," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 21 (Jan. 1972), pp. 7-14. First, according to Stewart, there must be a transactional view of communication; secondly, there must be personal involvement; and thirdly, there must be a concern for "relationship" communication. I personally believe a performance-oriented course could strive for each of the same three elements by having: (1) speakers become highly sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal feedback, being less structured, able to modify their messages accordingly; (2) speakers striving toward more involvement with both their messages and their audience; and (3) evaluations key on the interpretations of content that suggest variations in speaker-auditor relationships.

12. Ilardo, p. 3.

13. Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1954). ————————, *Toward A Psychology of Being*, second edition (Princeton: D. Van Nostrant Co., Inc., 1968).

14. Robert Ferrullo, "The Self-Concept in Communication," *The Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13 (June 1963), p. 77-86.

15. James McCroskey, "The Effects of the Basic Speech Course on Students' Attitudes," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 16 (Mar. 1967), pp. 115-117.

16. William Brooks and Sara Platz, "The Effects of Speech Training upon Self-Concept as a Communicator," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 17 (Jan. 1968), pp. 44-49.

17. Oscar K. Buross, Editor, *The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook*, Vol. 1, 1-544, (Highland Park, N.J., 1972), p. 288.

18. Everett Shostrom, "Actualization Therapy," a paper presented at the American Psychological Association meeting in Miami Beach, Florida, September, 1970.

19. Maslow, 1968.

20. Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Metamotivation: The Biological Rooting of the Value-Life," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 7 (Fall 1967), p. 59.

21. George Norlin, trans., *Isocrates (Nicocles or the Cyprians)* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Loeb Classical Library, 1928), pp. 79-81.

22. Mehrley and Backes, p. 207.

23. Edward Thorndike, *The Principles of Teaching* (New York: Seeler, 1906).

24. Lee Cronbach, *Educational Psychology*, second edition, (New York: Harcourt, 1963).

25. Samuel Becker, "Research on Speech Pedagogy," as quoted in Roger E. Nebergall (ed.), *Dimensions of Rhetorical Scholarship* (Norman: The Department of Speech, University of Oklahoma, 1963), in Mehrley and Backes, p. 207.

26. Several studies cited in the Becker article supporting the performance course; Kenneth Pasco and Harold Lillywhite, "Experimental Measurement of Personality Development and Adjustment in a Basic Communication Course," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 1 (Nov. 1951), pp. 21-14. Found that speech students gain significantly more in "personality" and "adjustment" than did control students who did not take the course. Forrest Rose, "Training in Speech and Changes in Personality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 26 (April 1940), pp. 193-196. Found that speech students increased significantly more in dominance and decreased significantly more in "neurotic tendancy." Glenn

Moore, "Personality Changes Resulting From Training in Speech Fundamentals," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 2 (1935), pp. 56-59. Found that speech students improved in emotional stability, self-sufficiency, extroversion, and dominance. Howard Gilkinson, "Indexes of Change in Attitudes and Behavior Among Students Enrolled in General Speech Courses," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 8 (1941), pp. 23-33. Reported that speech students increased their scores significantly on a test of "social behavior." Winston Brembeck, "The Effects of a Course in Argumentation on Critical Thinking Ability," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 16 (1949), pp. 177-189. Found a slight tendency for students taking a course in argumentation to improve slightly more in critical thinking ability than students not enrolled. Franklin Knower, "A Study of Speech Attitudes and Adjustments," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 5 (1938), pp. 130-203. Gilkinson. Found that the attitudes of students toward speaking improved during the period in which they are enrolled in a speech course. Ernest Henrikson, "Some Effects on Stage Fright of a Course in Speech," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 29 (Dec. 1943), pp. 490-491. Stanley Paulson, "Changes in Confidence During a Period of Speech Training: Transfer of Training and Comparison of Improved and Non-Improved Groups on the Bell Adjustment Inventory," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 18 (1951) pp. 260-265. Frank Miyamoto, *et al.*, "Self Concepts of Speech Skills," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 23 (March 1956), pp. 66-74. Found that students in speech increase their ratings of their confidence or their self-concepts of speaking ability during a course in speech.

27. Becker, p. 36. Cites Roy Nelson, "An Experimental Study of Four Methods of Teaching Beginning Speech in College," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota. Abstract in *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 22 (August 1955), p. 215.

28. Becker, p. 48.

29. Mehrley and Backes, p. 209.

30. From comments by Michael Burgoon in an address to the Florida Speech Association meeting in Orlando, Florida, October, 1975.

31. Henry Boettinger, *Moving Mountains or The Art and Craft of Letting Others See Things Your Way* (New York: Collier Books, 1969), p. 19.

32. Robert Kibler, Larry Barker, and David Miles, *Behavioral Objectives and Instruction* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1970), pp. 7-9.

33. Kibler, Barker, and Miles, p. 8.

34. Kibler, Barker, and Miles, p. 9.

35. Don Faules, Steve Littlejohn, and Joe Ayres, "An Experimental Study of the Comparative Effects of Three Instructional Methods on Speaking Effectiveness," *Speech Teacher*, Vol. 21 (Jan. 1972), pp. 46-52.

36. Faules, Littlejohn, and Ayres.

37. Roger W. Shuy, "Employee Selection, Training, Promotion: Pitfalls of Good Intentions," A prepublication version of a paper presented at the C.A.L. - N.C.T.E. conference on Education and Training in the National Interest: The Role of Language Variety, February 13-14, 1970. In Richard Hopper and Fred Williams' "Speech Characteristics and Employability," *Speech Monographs*, Vol. 40 (Nov. 1973), pp. 297-298.

38. Vance Packard, *The Pyramid Climbers* (Boston: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962).

39. Mark Knapp, "Public Speaking Training Programs in American Business and Industrial Organizations," *The Speech Teacher*, (Mar. 1969), pp. 129-134. Knapp cites a Swift and Company executive as saying, "The fact that we have had public speaking courses as a part of our evening class program for the past twenty-five years is an indication of the value we place upon speech training . . ."

40. Eugene White, *et al.*, "Three Interpretations of the First Course in Speech: A symposium," *Southern Speech Journal*, Vol. 20 (Winter, 1954), pp. 164-165.

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THE IN-THE-FIELD PROJECT: ESCAPING THE DULL TOPIC SYNDROME

VINCENT DI SALVO AND SARA A. BOATMAN

As teachers, we should be interested in providing the most efficient and productive kinds of learning experiences possible for our students. An analysis of selected principles of learning[1] indicates that the optimum conditions for students to learn include: 1. Active participation of the learner, 2. in a positive climate, 3. to achieve with a degree of success, 4. a clear learning goal, 5. which provides for personal application of the material to be learned.

As teachers of Speech Communication, we have special opportunities offered by our discipline to provide students with potentially rich learning experiences. For the past three years, the authors have been using a project for our students in both basic and upper-level courses which we find to be an extremely helpful assignment for facilitating this kind of learning—learning which we believe in and which we perceive our students to believe in as well.

In essence, the In-the-Field Project[2] has the student determine a communication question, problem, variable, or relationship of variables and then answer the question, suggest solutions to the problem, or derive conclusions about the variable or relationship based on his own field research.

The assignment results in experiential learning for students. It moves them beyond the half-hearted examination of current periodicals or manipulations of gimmicks to satisfy the assignment, "Give a speech"; it provides them with opportunities to examine communication in ongoing situations, to synthesize their findings, and to tackle what then becomes an important communication activity—the communication of their own realizations to others.

The In-the-Field Project has the following general goals:

1. To provide direct involvement of the student in the communication process; to move him beyond an exclusively intellectual approach to communication (variables) by having him deal directly with the variables;
2. To enable the student to learn more about the complexities of the communication process and its effect on behavior by identifying, selecting, and observing these variables;

Vincent Di Salvo and Sara A. Boatman teach at the Lincoln campus of the University of Nebraska.

3. To help the student to focus on the relationships between communication variables and behavior by having him justify his selection of variables;
4. To provide the opportunity for the student to communicate unique information with which he has strong ego involvement to individuals who do not share his ego-involvement, by having him develop his speech material from this project and then communicate it to his audience.

The basic procedures which we use in the implementation of the In-the-Field Project are as follows:

1. Students are introduced to the assignment by exposure to the general area of field research, with emphasis on the bystander intervention research conducted by Latané;[2] we attempt to acquaint the student with observational research conducted in ongoing situations. When the students begin to conceptualize the naturalistic field study, several journals[3] are cited to help them develop a better understanding of what the area of field research is all about.

2. After this conceptualization has started to develop, the students are asked to begin thinking about variables, ideas, questions, hypotheses, or problems which they would like to explore. We suggest to students to keep alert for possible initial ideas from classroom lecture and discussion, text materials,[4] personal experience, or instructor conferences. "Maybe that's a field study" is an often-used statement at this point in the procedure. The source of the students' idea is secondary; but it is essential for the assignment that students begin their thinking about the project early and that they do not allow themselves to become overwhelmed with the assignment.

3. As the students begin to generate ideas and discuss them as a classroom group, we usually present examples of previous projects. The use of examples often helps students to develop further their own ideas. We consciously attempt to avoid forcing an idea on a student, however.

4. Once an idea begins to take shape, the student is asked to attempt to conceptualize that idea into variables and to develop a rationale for the study of the variable(s). The student is encouraged to examine the literature and to discuss his ideas with the instructor and/or the class. The key to this portion of the procedure is the student's application of a variable or series of variables from the abstract level of lectures or readings to a "real" or behavioral level where things happen.

5. Having developed his ideas and appropriate rationale, the student is asked to develop a hypothesis or a research question based upon his previous readings and discussions which will provide some focus for the study in terms of potential outcomes.

6. The student is then asked to develop a plan for the field project. This aspect of the assignment includes the location of the study, the time aspects,

the people involved, recording techniques, how the variables will be implemented, securing permission if necessary, etc.

7. The student then executes the study. Every attempt is made to urge students to conduct this portion of their research well before the oral and written presentations are due.

8. Having executed the study and collected his data, the student then prepares a written report of the project. The written report usually includes the following areas: A. Purpose of the field project; B. Rationale for the project; C. Methodology; D. Results; E. Discussion.

9. Following the preparation of the written report, the student then prepares a fifteen or twenty minute oral presentation in any format that he feels will best achieve the general objective of explaining his field project to the class. We often suggest the use of visual aids to add further clarity to the presentation.

10. The students' oral presentations are scheduled to allow ample time for class interaction following each presentation. Often, peer grading is also implemented.

We have observed many merits of this assignment during the three years which we have been using it. Most importantly, we have been impressed with the variety of opportunities for learning which the projects provide. Students are learning by doing: They begin to see communication variables and processes with a clearer perspective provided by their primary experiences. As one student commented, "Reading about the properties of a group was interesting, but observing them in our media staff was *real*!" The student's data are first hand; but we have also observed many students turning to library research with a different objective than "because I have to do it"—their examination of existing references carries new importance because they are now using these sources to develop a rationale or provide explanations for their actual experiences.

We have also been extremely pleased with the opportunities afforded by the projects for the development of student responsibility and initiative. The student realizes that he is in charge; he is working with *his* idea and *his* procedures to develop *his* conclusions. While the assignment at first seems to be overwhelming, we have observed the students' enthusiasm and commitment to the projects develop as their projects develop (and we realize these feelings are reinforced because we as instructors are excited about the projects also); this ego-involvement is a potent reinforcer in the students' learning. One student has decided to expand his field project from last semester, which he calls his "Killer-Instinct Theory of Communication," to an independent study this semester; he said, "I can't stop now—there are too many things I haven't found out yet."

We are also quite pleased with the flexibility which the assignment

provides. The project can be structured to provide students with opportunities to communicate their findings through writing, speaking, or other media, such as audio or video tape. Content areas for the projects are endless. There are, of course, students who come to us with no initial idea for a project. However, after discussions pertaining to their interests, job aspirations, questions, and objections and reactions to communication study, they do discover areas to pursue. Last semester, one student even decided to replicate a previous project because his initial reaction to it when presented as a sample project was one of skepticism. The projects provide many opportunities for out-of-classroom experiences, including a great deal of instructor conferencing, and this in itself is an extremely positive effect of the assignment; often, the traditional role relationships of teacher-student develop into "colleague-relationships," as the student and instructor wrestle through problems together.

Our enthusiasm for the In-the-Field Project has grown over the three years which we have used it. New perspectives, approaches, and developments occur each time it is employed. But one thing doesn't change: Students are excited about it, and they learn from it. We invite other teachers to adapt this activity to their individual classes.

Sample In-The-Field Projects

1. "Steatopygia": A determination of the importance of physical appearance of the source concerning the participation of a receiver when he or she was confronted with the following statement: "Twenty percent of the population in the U. S. is affected by steatopygia; would you favor a program to combat and investigate this disease?"
2. "The Wit and Wisdom of Restroom Walls": A comparison of bathroom graffiti at a large state university and a small private college.
3. "A Comparative Study Between the Elderly in Two Nursing Homes": An investigation of the differences in communication style of the elderly who lived in a home that they did not leave and which was not reality-oriented versus the style of the elderly in a home that they could leave and which was reality-oriented.
4. "Tension-Releasing Mechanisms: A Behavioral Study of Expectant Fathers": An investigation of nonverbal tension-reduction behaviors displayed by expectant fathers in the fathers' waiting room at a local hospital in relationship to the number of the child expected (first through fourth).
5. "Will People Communicate in Small Areas?": An exploration of the effects of elevators on communication patterns, given the age of the people in the elevator, their sex, and the number of people in the elevator.
6. "Have You Seen My Brother?": A determination of how well people remember and give messages. The experimenter asked store personnel

to give a message to his "brother," indicating what the brother might be wearing; later, he returned in disguise to check the frequency and accuracy of the relay of the message.

7. "A Friendly Smile, a Sad Hello": An observation and analysis of "the stranger syndrome" in talking with people one does not know.

8. "Staked-Out Territory": An investigation of personal space invasion in the library, at a magazine stand, and in the classroom.

9. "The Bartender and I": An analysis of different communication styles people use to convince the bartender that one is "of age" without having to show an identification card.

10. "Need a Dime?": An investigation of the success of nonverbal communication (conducted while dressing a department store window) through gaining attention and relaying a message to passing shoppers to pick up a dime on the sidewalk.

1. William Brooks, "Innovative Instructional Strategies for Speech Communication," *Today's Speech*, 20 (Fall, 1972), pp. 39-45; James Canfield, Arlene Low, and Robert Mullin, "A Principle of Learning Approach to Analysis of Student Teachers' Verbal Teaching Behavior," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1965); Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969), pp. 157-164; Norman Wallen and Robert Travers, "Analysis and Investigation of Teaching Methods," *in Handbook of Research on Teaching*, N. L. Gage, ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 448-505.

2. Bib Latané and John Carley, *The Unresponsive Bystander—Why Doesn't He Help?* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

3. *Social Forces*, *Sociological Quarterly*, and *Social Problems* are cited for their frequent inclusion of Observer-Participant or Field Study reports.

4. Many ideas for field studies have been suggested and encouraged by materials in Larry Barker and Robert Kibler, *Speech Communication Behavior: Perspectives and Principles* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971); Kim Giffin and Bobby Patton, *Basic Readings in Interpersonal Communication* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); Joseph DeVito, *Communication Concepts and Processes* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971); Mark Knapp, *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); C. David Mortensen, *Basic Readings in Communication Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

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ON THE QUANTIFICATION OF INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION

RAY HEIDT

For several years I have been searching for a scale to measure interpersonal interaction in the fundamental Speech Communication class. While there are excellent scales available, the main difficulty in using them in a basic speech course is that they are rather cumbersome in administration and fail to engage the interest of the students in the measuring process.

I have developed a modification of standard "most-least" scales that examines the interpersonal process, while avoiding the criticisms. The administration of the test is as follows:

1. The class is given about two weeks notice that there will be a "test on names." This motivates them to get acquainted with group members without alerting them to the categories being examined.

2. On the day of the "test," a quick review of names is made by having the class sit in a circle and everyone, in turn, stating his or her name.

3. The class is then directed to take a sheet of paper, and number from one to seven.

4. For each of seven criteria given, they are to respond by writing one name after the appropriate number.

5. After each name they are to indicate whether or not that person was in the discussion group of the respondent in the week preceding–this reply is in the form of "yes" or "no."

6. The seven criteria are: (Indicate the name of the person in class whom ––)

   a. You feel you know the best.
   b. You understand the best.
   c. You understand the least.
   d. You feel talks the most.
   e. You feel talks the least.
   f. You feel is most honest in communicating.
   g. You feel is the most defensive in communicating.

I have arbitrarily chosen the above criteria as being the easiest factors of interpersonal communication to work with in the basic course. Other instructors may, of course, choose other criteria as being more suitable for their approach.

7. The responses are tabulated by counting the number of *no* (this person was *not* in a group with me) responses, and the number of *yes* (this

Ray Heidt teaches at Utah State University at Logan.

person *was* in a group with me) responses, for each person listed and creating an individual fraction of *no* over *yes* (no/yes). The order of *no* over *yes* was chosen because as the class members tend to increase interaction with persons outside the sub-group and into the class at large the numerator tends to increase, thus increasing the possibility of whole numbers developing and fostering the concept of *growing* in interpersonal skills. A sample report of results is shown here:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mary Ann S–	1	1	0	2	0	1	0

8. The scale is administered three times in a quarter; during the third week (after the first group assignment), the sixth week, and the tenth week. The resulting fluctuation of individual scores forms the basis for personal interviews with the student.

The raw data can be manipulated in various ways to achieve different indexes to interaction. For instance, an individual's scores may be added horizontally to obtain his Interaction Quotient (I.Q.), e.g., in the case of Mary Ann S– above, her IQ is 1/5, and she can compare herself with others in the group.

Another means of manipulation is to add all the numbers vertically in a particular column (say, column one "know the best") and achieve a score for the class as a whole on that particular criterion, for example, the class score for column one may be 9/21.

A third technique is to add all the columns for the class vertically, as in the previous method, then total these totals for a class IQ, e.g., 56/119; this figure can be reduced to a lower fraction 7/15 so that individual scores can be compared to the entire class.

The advantages of the above scale in a fundamental course are:

1. Students relate more readily to "measuring" others, since this is not as threatening to them as a situation where they are directly measured by others;

2. The technique provides motivation for those who don't like their score patterns; they receive an insight into how others view them;

3. It provides data for personal interviews with the students;

4. It can illustrate development of students in relating interpersonally by comparing the early, middle, and late scores;

5. It provides an excellent background for discussing and illustrating group roles and interaction processes.

I have found the above technique to be more useful in the basic course than other available scales for the above reasons, and would recommend it to any speech teacher who uses the interpersonal approach in teaching communication skills.

FROM THE TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK:

William G. Osborne, Valencia Community College, Orlando

COURSE: Fundamentals of Oral Communication

TOPIC: An Exercise in Self-Awareness

Who are *you*? Who *are* you? *Who* are you? This can be a familiar echo in an interpersonal communication classroom. Few people could argue the necessity of self-awareness in the process of communication. Actualizing self-concept theory and relating it to the "real" workings of the individual self can be a difficult process. The Public Collage is an exercise developed for this purpose.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a collage is "an artistic composition of materials and objects pasted over a surface, often with unifying lines and color." In this case, the collage would be a visual representation (pictures, words, objects, etc.) of the public self. The collage asks the student to creatively address the question, "How do you think others see you?"

Accurate knowledge of self involves a transaction which includes an interaction between the subjectivity of self and the objectivity of others. Self-disclosure and feedback provide this necessary dialogue. A person can perceive self ubiquitously but, a grasp of self-concept theory can facilitate conceptualization of this data.

The collage assignment is an attempt to juxtapose two theories of self with a classroom exercise. The first theory, Public-Real-Ideal self, presents a three dimensional approach to self-identification: the Public Self refers to the image others have of us; the Ideal Self indicates the person we would like to be; the Real Self is our subjective, motivating self. Second, Johari's Window approaches self through a transaction. Knowledge of self is obtained by the mutual sharing of information by the individual and other people. A relationship is built through enlarging the "free" or open areas while decreasing the "blind" or "hidden" areas.

In the third week of Interpersonal Communication class, the student is introduced to the Public Collage assignment. The completed collages are discussed in class the following week.

The method used by the student to complete the assignment is affected by two factors: Who contributes to the collage and how the collage is compiled. The student can rely totally on his own analysis of how others see him or he may bring in outside people to give his images context. Some students allow others to totally construct their collage. The student may approach the collage with a definite idea in mind and attempt to communicate that idea with proper images. Or, the student may approach

the assignment inductively, gather as many potential images as possible and then assimilate a representative package. A shortage of material will severely limit either approach. A person drawing only from a *Good Housekeeping* or a *National Lampoon* magazine might find his collage one-dimensional.

An "ideal" or "real" self motivation can enter the student's mind since he is aware that the collage will be presented and discussed in class. One student remarked, "I put things on the collage that I wanted the group to know, and omitted the things I didn't want to share in the group."

When it came time to present the collages in small groups, this same student elaborated with, "I found myself trying to account for conflicts between the real and public selves. Also, I felt I had to communicate in a manner consistent with my information given on the collage."

Generally, the sharing of collage information establishes a feeling of trust. The individual sees the entire group reciprocate his task by disclosing their collages. The threat of group feedback is diminished because the individual presents much more information than the "acquaintance" group would normally have access to. Consequently, most responses are limited to, "Gee, that's interesting" or "I didn't know that" or "I feel that way too."

The Public Collage allows the abstract qualities of self-concept to become attached to the concrete experience of the communicating self. Thus, the student discovers the overlap among Public, Real and Ideal selves. The small group transaction should centralize the precept that self-information is shared with and modified by others.

This author believes that the collage exercise allows self-concept to take form through a classroom experience. However, this is not the ultimate technique for illuminating self; it is one of many. As one student stated: ". . . I do feel my collage is accurate to some degree. However, I dare say I am more complex than images and words pasted on cardboard. To me, my collage is honest, *but* it *could be* interpreted wrongfully by an observer."

FROM THE TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK:

P. Judson Newcombe,
University of South Florida, Tampa

COURSE: Seminar for Student Interns

TOPIC: Learning Contracts

Student teachers at the University of South Florida complete their certification requirements by successfully passing internship (student teaching) and an intern seminar. They receive a "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" for their internship and a letter grade for the seminar.

The intern seminar for students in speech communication education deals with problems and concerns that may arise during internship or the first years of teaching. Often, it is the only on-campus course carried during the internship period. It provides time for interns to interact with each other and with their supervising professor. Normally, the professor is the individual who supervises them during their internship and who observes them in their respective classrooms. The seminar also provides members with opportunities to investigate teaching strategies and materials, professional responsibilities, and the practical application of cognitive and behavioral skills learned in previous education or content area courses.

Because interns are assigned to middle, junior, and senior high schools, they each have their own unique problems and concerns. Before the end of their internship, most of them teach four or more classes each day. Thus, they are devoting their energies to preparing daily lessons and evaluating their students. They have little time to prepare for special weekly seminar assignments. A seminar grade, based only on participation in the seminar, would be highly subjective in nature.

During the past five years, as professor of our intern seminars, I have used learning contracts to assist me in grading students who elect to work for more than a C in the seminar. At the beginning of the course the requirements for a C are specified: attendance at seven of ten sessions, completion of three extended lesson plans on assigned dates following a specified format, and submission of weekly schedules of intern teaching assignments. Students are not required to contract for grades above C and no pressure is applied by the professor to require completion of contract stipulations, once they have been submitted.

Interns who elect to contract for an A also must submit a contract for a B. This permits the professor to reject the materials submitted for an A without automatically removing the student from consideration for a B. However, before a student may be considered for an A, he or she must meet all the contracted stipulations for a B.

The following outline for a learning contract is used for writing contracts.

I. The learning contract should include:
   A. *Purpose:* a statement of the intended outcome of the learning activities for the intern.
   B. *Criteria Performance:* objectives that are stated in behavioral terms that identify and name the observable acts that you will accept as evidence that you have met your objectives.
      1. These objectives may consist of several specific statements.
      2. These objectives must communicate the instructional intent of the objectives stated under "Purpose."
      3. These objectives include *minimum* criteria of acceptable performance (usually stated in minimum number, percentage or proportion, or amount of acceptable deviation from some standard.)
      4. To qualify for a "C" the student will satisfy the minimum criteria established by the professor. Students wishing to earn a grade of "B" or "A" will specify separate criteria that are progressively more challenging than the minimum criteria for a "C."
   C. *Evaluation or Testing Situation:*
      1. The conditions which must be present for the student to demonstrate his mastery of his objectives must be stated. These conditions may be determined by the intern.
      2. The conditions required by the professor (class attendance, number of objectives to be completed, etc.) must be included.
   D. *Resources:*
      1. Activities and information sources to be used by the student for achieving his objectives will be listed.
      2. Special equipment and materials which will be used may be listed.
      3. When activities involve specific time periods, these periods of time will be listed, as well as specific meeting dates, places, and times (e.g. practice sessions.)
   E. *Signature and Date:*
      1. The student will sign and date his contract when he submits it to the professor.
      2. The professor will sign the contract when he accepts the conditions contained in it.

A date is set, at the beginning of the course, as a deadline for the submission of signed contracts to the professor. If the submitted contracts are written incorrectly, contain vague terms or objectives that cannot be measured objectively by the professor, or seem to require too much or too little of the intern in the remaining time, the contracts are returned to the students with written suggestions for their revision and resubmission within a specific time period. No further contracts are accepted and no further deadline extensions are given for contract revisions.

Interns are encouraged to submit contracts that relate to their preparations for teaching specific classes or levels of students, for handling assigned cocurricular activities, or to their becoming familiar with resources and

materials available to them *in their assigned schools*. However, some decide to do additional research on subjects or situations they will meet in the future and to submit tangible evidence of this research.

Interns have submitted written research reports, samples of student papers, letters from faculty members at their schools, extended lesson plans, resource units, course guides, photographs, audio tapes, charts and graphs, scrapbooks, and photocopied materials to support their contracts and to show they completed their objectives successfully. Most of this material is kept on file for use in conferences regarding seminar grades and for future reference, should the student ask for letters of recommendation several years after graduation.

As a consequence of using learning contracts as an educational strategy with interns in the intern seminar, I have found that:

1. Interns have tried to relate seminar requirements to their assigned teaching situations by incorporating preparation efforts for daily teaching into their learning contracts.
2. The responsibility for individualizing learning activities is shared with students. Thus, the responsibility for determining final grades becomes a shared obligation, with both parties to the contract knowing the specific, objective criteria that will be used for determining the grades.
3. Grades earned in the intern seminar tend to be distributed equally among "A", "B", and "C" rather than clustering at the upper end of the continuum. This tends to make seminar grades comparable with senior level on-campus classes in content areas.
4. Since many interns do not contract for a grade higher than a "C", the final responsibility for determining who should receive grades above "C" may be diminished considerably by the students themselves.
5. Intern teachers learn what a learning contract involves, how it functions, and how it may be used as an educational strategy. They may decide to use it as one of their teaching strategies in future situations.

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